

on whether there are one or two there—the nuclear waste bill; a series of high-tech bills. There could be as many as three or four of those coming out of the Commerce Committee. I will have to consult with the chairman as to exactly how many there will be. I believe they have already reported a couple, and there may be two more.

The Iran sanctions legislation is pending. We have tried to be cooperative with the administration on this issue, but we did get an agreement right at the end of the session before we went home for Easter as to when action could occur on the Iran sanctions. I believe that is before May 20, but we will reconfirm that later. And, of course, the tobacco legislation issue is pending before the Senate, having been reported by the Commerce Committee.

This is not an exclusive list, of course, and additional legislation or Executive Calendar items may be cleared for action. I look forward to a productive legislative period.

#### EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I can just say a few brief words about S. 1133, the Parent-Student Savings Account Plus Act, which is commonly referred to now as the A+ Act. Everywhere I went during the recess period in my State of Mississippi—and I did a number of events throughout the State in a variety of forums in towns and cities—education was at the top of every list.

I spoke to the Mississippi Economic Council, which is an organization really affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, but it represents a variety of businessmen and women, professionals, people who really want to make sure that we have what we need to create jobs and move forward economically and have opportunities for all our citizens. An important part of their plans for this year did include, of course, continued emphasis on education.

So I am really excited that a good portion of this week will be spent on debate concerning the education savings account and the other portions that we have added to this education bill in the Finance Committee and other amendments that will be offered on the floor of the Senate on both sides of the aisle.

Some people have said, "Well, it could be messy debating education with as many as a dozen or more amendments being in order and with second degrees being in order." I think there are very few issues that we could be debating in the Senate this year in America more important than education. Of course, there are differences as to how to proceed on this education issue.

I feel very strongly that we should encourage parents to save more for their children's education, not only for college but also for elementary and secondary education. We should make

it possible for parents and grandparents and scholarship groups to set aside money in savings, in an education IRA, and that money then could be used for a variety of needs for children, whether it is tuition, books, supplies, computers, transportation, even uniforms. In my hometown, I was surprised to learn that the school board had voted that the students will begin wearing a certain form of uniform because they think it will help cut down on some of the violence associated with the clothes that are worn to school.

I think there are a whole variety of options now that could be available. There are those who oppose the savings account for education for elementary and secondary students, but I ask why—we just last year, and the President signed into law, increased the opportunity for education savings accounts for higher education, and we raised the limit of those savings that could be set aside up to \$2,000 a year—why shouldn't it be available for elementary and secondary education?

There are some other components of this legislation that have the guarantee that it would be bipartisan. In addition to the bipartisan support for the education savings account, other components in the bill include the expansion of the exclusion of employer-provided educational benefits to graduate education, which is a policy strongly advocated by the Senator from New York, Senator MOYNIHAN. We should encourage employers to provide education benefits as a part of the package that they get in the agreement between employer and employee. This bill does that.

While I was home, I spoke with the treasurer of our State of Mississippi. He made a particular point of coming over and asking me, did the bill still include the State prepaid tuition programs? I assured him that it did. We should encourage parents and students to save for their tuition. In this bill they will be able to exclude from income payments from State prepaid tuition programs.

Also, this bill does provide for some opportunity for bonds for school construction. I personally do not think the Federal Government should begin paying for school construction at the local level. I think that is a decision that should be made by the States, by the local governments.

Some people say, "Well, they can't afford it." I represent the poorest State in the Nation—or what was the poorest State; thank goodness we are making progress now and getting off the bottom of many lists—but one of the ways we have done that is we have been putting more money into education, more money into building new high schools and new elementary schools. The education level in the State has generally been rising. The credit goes to the parents, the administrators, and the teachers at the local level. But to provide some process where there would be this bonding opportunity for school

construction is one that I think we should consider. And it is in the legislation.

There will be a number of other amendments that will be offered from both sides of the aisle. I will agree with some of them, and I will disagree violently with some of the others. But I think this is a debate worth having. I commend Senator COVERDELL for his dogged work in support of education in this bill and the cooperation he has had from and with the Senator from New Jersey, Senator TORRICELLI.

So this will be a great opportunity this week to do some things that will help education. One of the amendments that will be offered could be to consolidate some of the many, many Federal education programs into block grants and then allow that money to go back through the States with the direction that 95 percent of the money go to the school districts. Only 5 percent of it can be eaten up by administrative costs; 95 percent of it will go to the school districts without strings attached. Let the schools decide. Let the local school officials decide if that money will be used for STAR teachers or for construction, if you will. It would be their choice. That is the fundamental difference between what some others will be trying to do, which would mean more decisions, more money, more direction and more strings from Washington. That is not the answer. I think in many cases that is the problem.

So, it will be an interesting debate. I commend the Senators for working with me to try to get an agreement as to how this process will go forward. We will spend today and all of tomorrow and possibly or probably even part of Wednesday completing this legislation, but it is time well spent.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there now will be a period for the transaction of morning business not to exceed 2 hours.

Under the previous order, there will now be 1 hour under the control of the Senator from Nebraska, Senator HAGEL.

Mr. HAGEL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. HAGEL. Thank you, Mr. President.

#### U.N. GLOBAL CLIMATE TREATY

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, last month the U.N. global climate treaty became available for the formal signatures of those countries who reached